

Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Gen. Tommy R.

Franks, USA (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks in Vienna, Ohio October 27, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thanks so much for coming. My fellow Republicans, discerning Democrats, wise independents, I'm here to ask for your vote and ask for your help.

We're getting close to voting time here in Ohio. It's coming close to time for people to get out and exercise their responsibility in a free society. And so I'm asking you to get people to go to the polls. I'm asking you to get your friends and neighbors to do their duty. Don't overlook discerning Democrats, people like the mayor and Senator Miller. Don't overlook people who understand that I stand for all of America, that my vision is a vision for everybody. And when you get them headed to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Perhaps the most important reason why your fellow citizens ought to vote for me is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. I'm sure many of you will relate to this. When I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, but make me a promise." I said, "Okay, what is it?" She said, "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [Laughter] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. She's giving a lot of speeches, and when she speaks, the American people see a warm, compassionate, strong First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Now, look, I admit it, he does not have the waviest hair in the race. [Laughter] I see some others who are follically challenged. [Laughter] But you'll be happy

to hear I did not pick the man because of his hairdo. [Laughter] I picked him because of his experience. I picked him because of his judgment. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

Nothing better than traveling throughout Ohio with Zell Miller. What a good man, good, down-to-earth, solid citizen of the United States of America. Zell, we're proud you're here.

And I want to thank George McKelvey, the mayor of Youngstown, Ohio. I can't thank him enough for his friendship and his strong support.

I'm proud to be with your fine Governor, Bob Taft. Governor, thanks for being here. I want to thank all the State and local officials, all the candidates who are running for different offices.

I want to thank my friend Sammy Kershaw. I appreciate you, Sammy. And I want to thank Lorrie Morgan as well. We're honored you're here. I want to thank the Boardman High School marching band for being here.

Most of all, I want to thank you all for coming. You're lifting my soul and lifting my spirits. It is so great to see such a big crowd. I want to thank you for putting up the signs. I want to thank you for making the phone calls. I want to thank you for what you're going to do as we're coming down the stretch, which is to turn out that vote. With your help, there is no doubt in my mind, we will carry Ohio again and win a great victory.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. This election comes down to some clear choices for America's families, choices on issues of great consequence.

The first clear choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats to our Nation. The terrorists who killed thousands are still dangerous, and they're determined. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war against terror.

The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened the protections for the homeland. We're reforming our intelligence services. We're transforming our military. There will be no draft; the All-Volunteer Army will remain an all-volunteer army. We are relentless. We are steadfast. We are pursuing the enemy across the Earth so we do not have to face them here at home.

And we are spreading liberty. I want you to tell your children what a monumental event has taken place in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls couldn't go to school, and if their mothers didn't toe the line of the ideologues of hate, the Taliban, they were pulled out in the public square and whipped and sometimes executed. But because we acted in our self-defense, because we acted to remove terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, because we upheld doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist," millions of people in Af-

ghanistan went to the polls to vote for a President. The first voter was a 19-year-old woman. Freedom is on the march.

Iraq will have Presidential elections. Think how far that country has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. We believe everybody wants to be free. We believe in the power of liberty to transform societies. And we believe that not because freedom is America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

A President must lead with consistency and strength. In war, sometimes you change your tactics but never your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you might not agree with me, you know where I stand, you know what I believe, and you know where I intend to lead this country. On good days and on bad days, whether the polls are up or the polls are down, I am determined to protect the American people. I will continue to lead with resolve. And I can assure you, I will always stand by the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform as they protect us.

And that's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003, asking for \$87 billion to support our troops in harm's way. It was vital funding request. We got good support for that request except from a handful of people. I see we got a lot of veterans here. I want to thank you for serving and setting such a great example. You all know what I'm talking about when I say "support our troops in harm's way." You know how important that is. Well, most of them in Congress understood how important it was. I want you to tell your friends and neighbors, Republicans, Democrats, independents, about this startling statistic: There were only four Members of the United States Senate that voted to authorize the use of force and then did not provide the funding to our troops in combat—only four, two of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him about that vote, and you might remember perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign when John Kerry said, “I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, right before I voted against it.”

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You know, I haven’t spent as much time in Youngstown as the mayor has, but you know, I talked to the mayor, and he assures me not many people in Youngstown, Ohio, talk like that. [Laughter] People in this part of the world like somebody who shoots straight with them.

They finally pressed him, and Senator Kerry finally said, after about four or five different answers as to—about why he made the vote he made, he said, “The whole thing was a complicated matter.” My fellow Americans, there is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

A President must be consistent. After repeatedly calling Iraq the “wrong war” and a “diversion,” Senator Kerry this week seemed shocked to learn that Iraq was a dangerous place full of dangerous weapons. [Laughter] The Senator used to know that, even though he seems to have forgotten it over the course of this campaign. But after all, that’s why we went into Iraq. Iraq was a dangerous place run by a dangerous tyrant who hated America and who had a lot of weapons. We’ve seized or destroyed more than 400,000 tons of munitions, including explosives, at more than thousands of sites. And we’re continuing to round up the weapons almost every day.

I want to remind the American people, if Senator Kerry had his way, we would still be taking our “global test.”

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Saddam Hussein would still be in power.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He would control all those weapons and explosives and could have shared them with our terrorist enemies.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now the Senator is making wild charges about missing explosives, when his top foreign policy adviser admits, “We don’t know the facts,” end quote. Think about that. The Senator is denigrating the actions of our troops and commanders in the field without knowing the facts. Unfortunately, that’s part of the pattern of saying anything it takes to get elected, like when he charged that our military failed to get Usama bin Laden at Tora Bora, even though our top military commander, General Tommy Franks, said, “The Senator’s understanding of events does not square with reality,” and intelligence reports place bin Laden in any of several different countries at the time.

See, our military is now investigating a number of possible scenarios, including this one: that explosives may have been moved before our troops even arrived—even arrived at the site. The investigation is important and ongoing. And a political candidate who jumps to conclusions without knowing the facts is not the person you want as the Commander in Chief.

We have a very different perspective when it comes to protecting the American people. Senator Kerry says that September the 11th did not change him much at all.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Those were his words. That’s what he said. And his policies make that clear. He says the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation. My outlook was changed on September the 11th. It changed my view of risks we face.

I’ll never forget the day when I was at Ground Zero on September the 14th, 2001. The sights and sounds of that day will never escape my memory. Workers in hard-hats were yelling at me at the top of their lungs, “Whatever it takes.” I remember the man coming out and grabbing me by the arm and looking me square in the eye, and he said, “Do not let me down.” Ever since that day, I have awakened wondering how best to protect this country, trying to

figure out everything we can do to protect you. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

The second clear choice in this election concerns your families' budget, your wallet. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. I kept my word. We doubled the child credit to \$1,000 per child to help you raise your kids. We reduced the marriage penalty. We believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest tax bracket to 10 percent to help the working Americans. We reduced income taxes for everybody who pays taxes.

I want you to tell your friends and neighbors, remind them before they go to the polls, what our economy has been through. Six months prior to my arrival in Washington, the stock market was in serious decline—six months prior to my arrival. Then we had a recession. Then we had some corporate scandals. We passed laws, tough laws that now make it abundantly clear we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. We lost nearly one million jobs after the attacks on our country on September the 11th, 2001. We have been through a lot.

But our economic policies, our policies of helping the small businesses and helping the families, have led us back to growth. Our economy is growing as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. We have added 1.9 million new jobs in the last 13 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. I understand you've had tough times in Ohio. I know that. I've traveled your State a lot. But let me remind you, things are getting better here. The unemployment rate dropped from 6.3 percent to 6 percent last month. We added 5,500 new jobs in one month here in the State of Ohio.

But there's more work to be done. There's more work to be done. I signed

a bill last week to help our manufacturing sector here in Ohio and across the country. We'll continue to support our community colleges. We've expanded trade adjustment assistance to make sure our workers have got the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. We have overcome a lot together. Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

My opponent has a different point of view, a different view about your family's budget. To put it bluntly, he intends to take a big chunk out of it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted for all the tax relief—against all the tax relief. We put the tax relief up there to stimulate the economy, to encourage consumption, to help investment, to stimulate our small businesses. And he voted “no.” If he had had his way, the average family in America would be paying 2,000 more dollars in income taxes to the Federal Government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's been in the United States Senate 20 years, and he's voted to raise taxes 98 times. That's five times a year. I would call that a predictable pattern. [Laughter] I would call that as an indicator. When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. [Laughter] I also want to remind you, he's promised \$2.2 trillion of new Federal spending. That's trillion with a “T.” That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts.

So they asked him, “How are you going to pay for it?” He threw out that same old, tired line we've heard every 4 years: “Oh, I'll pay for it by taxing the rich.” The problem is, is that when you raise the top two brackets, you only raise between 600 and 800 billion dollars. There is what I would call a tax gap. That would be the difference between what he's promised and what he can pay for. And when you have a tax gap like that and you've got a man of his record running for President, guess who usually gets to pay?

Audience members. We do!

The President. Here's the good news. We're not going to let him tax you; we're going to carry Ohio and win a great victory. Senator Kerry can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

Third clear choice in this election involves the quality of life for our families. A good education and quality health care are important for our families. As a candidate, I pledged to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools. I kept my word. We passed education reforms to bring high standards to our schools. We increased Federal spending, but instead—in return for Federal spending, increases of Federal spending, we said, “Measure. Show us.” We believe in accountability. You cannot solve a problem unless you diagnose a problem. We are diagnosing and solving problems all across America. Math and reading scores are up. The achievement gap for minority students across our country is closing. We'll extend these kind of reforms and high standards to our high schools so that no child is left behind in America.

We'll improve our lives for our families by making sure health care is affordable and accessible. We'll take care of the low-income and the needy by expanding community health centers across our country. We will work to make sure our low-income children's health program is fully subscribed. To make sure health care is affordable, we will promote health savings accounts, which will help our families and small businesses better afford insurance. We will allow small businesses to pool risk, to join together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts big companies are able to do.

And to help families and small businesses afford health care, we will do something about the frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care. We have a problem when it comes to these lawsuits. I have met too many ob-gyns that are being run out of the practice of medicine because their premiums are too high. I have met

too many pregnant moms who are worried about their health care and the health care of their child because they can't find an ob-gyn that's close to the community in which they live. This is a national problem that requires a national solution. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-personal-injury-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors of Ohio, the patients of Ohio. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

I remember one of those debates when my opponent looked straight in the camera and said—when asked about his health care plan, he said, “The Government doesn't have anything to do with it.” I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*]

The Government has got a lot to do with it. About 80 percent of the people who sign up for health insurance under his plan will end up on the Government. Do you realize, when you make it easier for people to get on Medicaid, small businesses will no longer provide insurance because the Government will provide insurance, moving people from the private sector to the Government? Now, listen, when the Government starts writing checks, the Government starts making rules. And when the Government starts making rules, the Government starts making decisions on behalf of the people, and the Government starts to ration health care, and they decide your doctors, and then they start telling your doctors what to do. Federally-run health care is the wrong prescription for America's families. In all we do to improve health care, we'll make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to our seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I

ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drugs. I kept my word. We are strengthening Medicare. Seniors are now getting discounts on medicine with drug discount cards. Poor seniors can get \$600 worth of help on their drug discount card this year and next year. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get a prescription drug benefit when it comes to Medicare.

And we'll keep our promise of Social Security for our seniors. Let me remind you about what took place in the 2000 campaign. That same old, tired scare tactic was unleashed—probably being done today too, who knows. People said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors will not get their checks." Now, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors, George W. did get elected, and the seniors did get their checks. And our seniors will continue to get their checks. And baby boomers like me and a couple of others I see out there, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether or not Social Security will be available for them when they retire. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and set up a personal savings account, an account that earns a better rate of return, an account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

My opponent takes a different approach. He has said that he is going to protect Social Security, but I want you to remind your friends and neighbors of this fact: He's the only candidate in this race who has voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He can run from that record, but I'm not going to let him hide.

And when it comes to the next generation, when it comes to our children and our grandchildren, he hasn't offered any

reform. See, the job of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future generations and future Presidents. In a new term, I'll bring Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen Social Security so our children will be able to have a Social Security system that works.

In this campaign, I'm speaking to the hopes of all Americans. The President's job is not to lead one party but to serve one Nation. I'm proud to have lifelong Democrats like Zell and George by my side in this campaign, and they're joined by millions of other Democrats all across this country. As the citizens of this Nation prepare to vote, I want to speak directly to the Democrats. I'm a proud Republican, but I believe my policies appeal to many Democrats. In fact, I believe my opponent is running away from some of the great traditions of the Democratic Party. If you're a Democrat and you want America to be strong and confident in our ideals, I would be honored to have your vote.

The Democratic Party has a great tradition of leading this country with strength and conviction in times of war. I think of Franklin Roosevelt's commitment to total victory. I think of Harry Truman's clear vision at the beginning of the cold war. I think of John Kennedy's brave declaration of American ideals. President Kennedy said, "The rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God."

Many Democrats look at my opponent and wonder where that great tradition of their party has gone. My opponent takes a narrow, defensive view of the war on terror. As the United States of America hunts down the terrorists and liberates millions from tyranny and aids the rise of liberty in distant lands, my opponent counsels retreat. He votes against supporting our troops in combat. He downplays the power of democracy and adopts a narrow so-called realism that is little more than defeatism.

I believe—I believe that American leadership is the hope of the oppressed, the

source of security, and the greatest force for good in this world. I believe the liberation of captive peoples is a noble achievement that all Americans can be proud of. I believe that our troops in the field need our support 100 percent of the time.

If you are a Democrat who wants America to lead with strength and idealism, I would be honored to have your support. The Democratic party has a tradition for support of our public schools. I think about Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey, who always stood up for the right of the poor and minority children to get the best education America could offer. Many Democrats look at my opponent and wonder where that firm conviction has gone. Just as teachers and principals across America are lifting the sights of our schools and raising the test scores of minority children, my opponent is talking about weakening the standards and going back to the old days of stagnation and excuses for failure.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I got into politics and I ran for Governor of my State because I would not stand by and watch another generation of students miss out on the opportunity of America. And when I came to Washington, I made schools my top domestic priority. If you are a Democrat who believes in strong public schools that teach every child, I'd be honored to have your vote.

Americans of both political parties have always had respect and reverence for the institution of marriage. Never in our history has marriage been a partisan issue, and it's not a partisan issue today. Yet, many Democrats look at my opponent and wonder, where is his commitment to defending the basic institution of civilization?. He says he supports marriage, but he will do nothing to defend it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. My opponent even voted against the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as between a man and a woman. And two-thirds of the Democrats

in the Senate supported it, and my predecessor, Bill Clinton, signed it into law. On the issue of protecting marriage, the Senator from Massachusetts is outside the mainstream of America and outside the mainstream of the Democratic Party.

I believe that our society must show tolerance and respect for every individual. Yet, I do not believe this commitment to tolerance requires us to redefine marriage. If you are a Democrat who believes that marriage should be protected from activist judges, I'd be honored to have your vote.

The Democrat Party is also a great tradition of defending the defenseless. I remember the strong conscience of the late Democratic Governor of Pennsylvania, Robert Casey, who once said that when he looked to an unborn child, the real issue is not when life begins but when love begins. I remember the moral clarity of the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York, who said that partial-birth abortion is, quote, "as close to infanticide as anything I have come upon."

Many opponents—many Democrats look at my opponent and see an attitude that is much more extreme. He says that life begins at conception but denies that our caring society should prevent even partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I proudly signed the ban on partial-birth abortion. Preventing partial-birth abortion is an ethical conviction shared by many people of every faith and by people who have no religion at all. I understand good people disagree on the life issue, and I'll continue to work with Republicans and Democrats to find common ground on the difficult questions and move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life. If you are a Democrat who believes that our society must always have room for the voiceless and the vulnerable, I would be honored to have your vote.

I know that Democrats are not going to agree with me on every issue, yet on the big issues of our country's security, victory in the war against terror, improving our public schools, respecting marriage and human life, I hope people who usually vote for the other party will take a close look at my agenda. If you are a Democrat and your dreams and goals are not found on the far left wing of the Democratic Party, I'd be honored to have your vote. And next Tuesday, I ask you to stand with me.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I am optimistic about our great land. I love my country. The great strength of America is found in the hearts and souls of our people. What a fantastic land we have. One of my favorite quotes was written by a fellow Texan, a fellow named Tom Lea. And here's what he said, he said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." You know, my opponent has spent much of this campaign talking about the day that is gone. I'm talking about the day that is coming.

Because we have done the hard work of climbing that mountain, we can see the valley below. Over the next 4 years, we'll work to protect our families; we'll build our prosperity; we will defend the deepest values. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to spread liberty so we can achieve the peace we want for our children and our grandchildren.

When I traveled your State 4 years ago, I made you this pledge: I said if I was—if I happened to win that election, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:16 p.m. at the Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers Sammy Kershaw and Lorrie Morgan; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Remarks in Findlay, Ohio October 27, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. You know, it is such a beautiful day in Flag City, I think I'll just take off my jacket and stay a while. Thanks for coming out. You are lifting our spirits. We're honored you're here. And Laura and I have come with the great Senator from Georgia to not only ask for your vote but to ask for your help. We need your help coming down the stretch to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls.

We have a duty in our democracy to vote. We have an obligation to vote. So

I'm asking you to tell your friends and neighbors about that obligation. Get our Republicans to go out there. Get independents to go out there. And find those discerning Democrats like Zell Miller and head them to the polls. And when you get them to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer America and a stronger America and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!